

CHRISTIAN PHILANTHROPIST.

DEVOTED TO LITERATURE AND RELIGION.

PUBLISHED EVERY TUESDAY, BY DANIEL K. WHITAKER, NEW-BEDFORD.

VOL. I.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1822.

No. 25.

MISCELLANY.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN PHILANTHROPIST.

A DIALOGUE

BETWEEN COHELETH AND PHILAETHES.

Cohleth. You are a heretic; you ought to be burnt; we have denied you christian fellowship.

Philaethes. You may deny us what you please; you cannot hinder our using the Bible—it is the only weapon we need to repel all your fire; you are disposed to give no quarters; we ask for none. We trust we believe the scripture account of God, Christ and the Holy Spirit; the scripture doctrine of the atonement, imputed sin and righteousness, and the scripture doctrine of original sin, and we believe you deny them all. If you would cast the beam out of your own eye, you would see clearly to cast the mote out of your brother's eye. We do not assume to ourselves infallibility, and we fear not the judgment of fallible men; we wish for no weapons but the christian; human power, fire and faggot never did the cause of Christ any good.

Coh. If justice is not satisfied in the pardon of sin, how does it appear that God is just?

Phi. If justice is satisfied, how does it appear that He is merciful? God's justice and mercy are not at war; God dispenses his mercy in a way consistent with himself, his laws and government. Through Christ we derive power to obey the Gospel, and are delivered from the condemnatory sentence of the law.

Coh. We will not give up the Calvinistic notion of imputed sin and righteousness.

Phi. You may as well attempt to change virtue into vice, or vice into virtue as to attempt to prove that sin or righteousness are imputed to any but the sinner or the righteous.

Coh. Salvation is wholly unconditional—(Vid. Proudfit, Baist, Woods, &c. &c.)

Phi. Then why do you preach and pretend that you are sent of God to offer salvation to mankind? Do offers imply no conditions? If it is unconditional, neither you, men, nor means have any thing to do about it—(Vid. Westminster Confession, &c.) "God has decreed the elect to salvation, without any foresight of faith or good works, or any thing in the creature, or conditions or causes moving him thereunto; they are altogether passive therein. Others are fore-ordained to everlasting destruction." (Sec. 37, 38, 52, 73.) "Adam conveyed to his posterity a totally corrupt nature, wholly defiled in all his powers, in all the faculties and parts of soul and body," &c. (Sec. 51.)

If the statement in the Confession relating to the decree of God, and to the nature with which he is born into the world be true, then the decrees of God respecting man are unconditional and absolute, and no man can help another, and moral means and motives are of no use. It is nonsense to pretend that one man is sent to call another out of this corruption of nature; he cannot call himself out of it: he can as soon call the dead out of their graves; it is wholly God's work; it is a work of creation; new powers and a new nature must be given. Who else but God can change the nature he has made? Did Adam or we make our nature?

Upon this plan, it is impossible to prove that God is sincere in his offers of salvation to all men. An offer presupposes terms; an offer that has no terms is a nullity; it is nonsense; a sincere offer supposes an offer of all prerequisites, of all things necessary to comply with the offer. It appears to me impossible that those who preach this doctrine should be honest men. If they can turn and twist themselves into honesty and sincerity in their conduct, they understand turning and twisting better than I do.

Coh. Regeneration is a moral change; it is only a change of will; all the other powers and faculties of the soul are as pure as Adam's were before he sinned.

Phi. Then where is this depraved and totally corrupt nature? According to this statement nothing is wanting but an act of the will once, and all would be well for time and eternity. Here is turning and twisting with a witness. What shall I believe? Here is a shot from the Calvinistic great gun.

Coh. Men have natural power to do all God requires, but no moral.

Phi. Then how is nature corrupt, and totally corrupt? Where in the bible do we find power split up into natural and moral, passive power; natural and moral ability and inability. These phrases are only evasions, when one is pinched to get rid of an answer. It is of no use to inform us that Edwards and Sapherus taught that Adam and his posterity were one moral whole, one moral person. It is of no use to tell of the opinions of Godwin, or the reasonings of Hobbes and Spinoza; it is of no use to plead sophic or philosophic necessity; antecedent or consequent necessity; natural or moral necessity. The sinning of Adam's posterity, no more proves an antecedent, totally depraved nature, than Adam's sinning proves an antecedent totally depraved nature. Adam and his posterity were the cause of their own sin, or God was the cause; the spring of action must be in the creature or the Creator; if in the latter, then Jehovah is the cause of all sin and the fountain of all iniquity!! Sin must arise from the abuse of powers which God has given to man, or God must be the immediate efficient cause of it. Drs. Hopkins and Emmons have honestly supposed the latter as a just consequence from Calvinism or their own *ism*. Liberty consists in power, and not in act; in a power that may be used well or ill, or there can be no accountability, praise or blame, reward or punishment. If this is not true no man may trouble himself about his actions or an hereafter. If liberty consists in act, as Edwards, Hobbes and Hopkins suppose, it must lead up to the first causal act, which is God's, and He must cause sin and every thing; and if his causing good prove him a good being, his causing evil proves him an evil being; which is Hobbism, Spinozism, Godwinism, Humism, &c. which atheists wish to establish. If to get rid of the difficulty, it be pleaded that God did not cause sin, but that it somehow exists, so may every thing and all that we see and feel be neither cause nor effect, something nor nothing. Mystery upon mystery! It is indeed melancholy that men who call themselves Christians should go to atheists for arguments to support their cause. The whole design of these atheistical writers was to destroy religion. Admit their arguments, and it must be granted that God is a mixture of good and

evil, or we are a part of God, or there is no God, no hereafter, no reward or punishment. It is astonishing that Edwards should use the same texts from the same Bible that Hobbes uses to destroy the Bible, or the being of a good God: he somehow admits an almighty minister of fate; and are the ideas which Edwards entertains of God much better? Upon your scheme, Cohleth, it is impossible to prove virtue or vice, if mankind act only as they are acted upon; they are neither praise or blame worthy; we are accountable for no action; we have not moral power to chuse or to refuse; voluntary no more proves freedom than involuntary, will than nill. To constitute accountability, there must be a power to chuse or to refuse the action and its motives. Power that is irresistible destroys all praise or blame. Every argument that has been offered to the contrary of this statement has been or may be easily answered.

BIBLE MAN.

FOR THE PHILANTHROPIST.

THE CORRESPONDENT, No. 7.

We are sometimes told that the doctrine of the Trinity is very clearly revealed in the Scriptures, and that every true christian cannot fail to find it there. Yet it is not denied, that this doctrine is in no part of the sacred volume expressly named. This is somewhat remarkable, on supposition that it is an essential doctrine of Christianity; and it is a fact, my friend, which well deserves your consideration. We are called upon, by our orthodox brethren, to receive a doctrine, as fundamental in forming the christian character, and we anxiously ask them, but in vain, to point us to the passage which contains this all-important doctrine. We say, show us such a passage, and we will unhesitatingly receive the doctrine, as "worthy of all acceptance." The Scriptures, we are constrained to assert, do not contain it. We find in them no form of expression which resembles Trinity, or Triune God. The Prophets did not preach it. It is nowhere recorded in the lessons of Jesus, nor in the teachings of his Apostles. That memorable passage, 1st epistle John, v. chapter, 7 verse: "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one," on which the doctrine of the Trinity has leaned for support, and toward which it still casts a "longing, lingering look," has, it is very well known, been given up by all learned Trinitarians. It is considered by those of them, who have examined its history and evidence, not less than by Unitarians, as unquestionably an interpolation.

But to the fact, that the Trinity is a term totally unknown in the Scriptures. If we must believe this doctrine, why can we not find the passages, or one solitary passage, in which it is contained? Why can not its advocates aid our inquiries in regard to this important subject? We are not less desirous than they, of becoming acquainted with all scripture truths. Nor have they higher respect than ourselves for the decisions of Scripture. We find the doctrines of love to God and our neighbour; of faith and repentance; of humility, hope, and charity; of the resurrection, everlasting punishment, and life eternal, very clearly expressed. We are under no necessity to

assume nor to infer these doctrines. They are presented in a perceptible and tangible form. The moral precepts of Christianity, the powerful inducements to piety and virtue, are given in the most intelligible language. But this very important doctrine, to be believed, must be assumed or inferred. Yet it cannot, with even the feeblest claim to truth or propriety, be assumed; for there is nothing within the grasp of the imagination, more remote from a self-evident truth. And how can we safely infer this doctrine? More especially, how can we assert, that those who cannot form it by induction or fair inference, are unsound in the faith, and undeserving the christian name? Who does not know how often falsehood is inferred for truth? Who does not know what a variety of meanings is drawn from the same passages, either in the sacred, or in profane writings? On passages, to which different constructions are given, whose construction shall be admitted as unquestionably correct? We are in the number of those who are convinced, that the passages brought in support of the doctrine of the Trinity, might quite as well be arranged on the other side. We much too often examine the scriptures for the purpose of supporting this doctrine, with the mind already furnished with prepossessions and assurances of its truth and divinity. It is much too common to assert unhesitatingly, that this and that doctrine, which is merely inferred from passages, at least of doubtful interpretation, is a doctrine of scripture; or to assume what should be established, if established at all, by valid proof. A fundamental doctrine cannot rest on what you or I only may be convinced is the import of scripture. We are to look for such a doctrine, in words which cannot be misunderstood.

Let us briefly notice two or three passages. Take this, for example.—“I and my Father are one.” You say, perhaps, that this clearly signifies that Christ is divine; that he and the Father are numerically and in essence, one being, one God. But another man who draws inferences as fairly and conclusively as you, understands by it, that Christ and the Father are one in affection and design, in the same sense as the disciples were, and in the same sense as all the friends of Christianity should be one, and in no other sense. You may consider his view of this passage incorrect and heretical; and he may consider yours unscriptural and absurd. But shall you for this difference, for you have both honestly drawn the inference that yours is the true meaning of the passage; shall you say each of the other, your opinion furnishes proof that you possess not the genuine christian character?—Take another example. Heb. 1 chap. 8 verse. “But unto the Son he saith, thy throne, O God, is forever and ever,” &c. It is well known that the original authorizes a different rendering. Instead of “thy throne, O God;” it may as well be translated, “God is thy throne.” But in the next verse, the Son is clearly represented as inferior to Almighty God. “Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore, God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness, above thy fellows.” The sacred writers appear to me to have taken care to secure the unequalled majesty of the Supreme God. You infer from this passage, it may be, that Jesus is the eternal Jehovah. I must make a very different inference. It is to my mind perfectly manifest, that as Moses was called God, and as they were called Gods “to whom the word of God came,” so wherever the Son can be said to have this appellation, it is in a subordinate sense. On supposition that Christ is the Supreme God, who, in this passage, is intended by his God; and who are to be understood by his fellows, on the same supposition?—Let me refer you to another passage, to

John's gospel, 5 chap. 17 to 39 verse. “*The Son can do nothing of himself,*” said Christ, directly on the Jews saying, (recollect that they were his enemies,) that he made himself equal with God. “*The Father hath given to the Son to have life in himself, and hath given him authority,*” &c. “*I am,*” said Christ, “*he that searcheth the reins and the heart, to give to every one of you according to your works—even as I received of my Father.*” “*Now we are sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee; by this we believe that thou camest forth from God*”—not that thou art very God. The impression on my mind from this passage, is irresistible, that Jesus considered, and wished the Jews to consider, that his power was derived from God; that the miracles which he wrought, were wrought, not by his own power, but by the power which God communicated to him; and I am satisfied with receiving Christ's explicit declaration as unquestionably true, that he could do nothing of himself, but as he was commissioned and empowered by his Father and our Father, by his God and our God.

K.

NOTE. The writer observed several small errors of the type, in No. 6, of the Correspondent, which must be perceived to have been accidental.

Christian Philanthropist.

NEW-BEDFORD, OCTOBER 29, 1822.

It has become so fashionable of late for British Reviewers to speak ill of American productions, and for Americans to treat their criticisms with deserved ridicule and contempt, as the offspring of political prejudices or literary jealousy, that in the fire of the contest the good old English writers have been too much neglected, and falsely considered as authors of the same stamp, which they are not. In presenting to our readers a series of essays on the literary character of Dr. Samuel Johnson, it is unnecessary to state, that we are not actuated by any such sentiments. We intend to give an unprejudiced account of the writings and genius of this remarkable man, and solicit their candour to what we may say upon the subject.

THE LITERARY CHARACTER OF DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

He who reviews the history of the Arts and Sciences in the different ages of the world, will discover that they have been subject to continual revolutions; that like many other things, they have had their rise, elevation and declension; and that their original principles have been sometimes possible, sometimes probable, but afterwards certain. He discerns, moreover, that those personages, who have been instrumental in ushering in the new era of discoveries, have been praised as lights of the world, and that they obtained their reputation by the exertion of profound genius.—Sometimes an interval of several ages has elapsed, without producing its great men. We find them scattered in different periods and places, so remote from each other, that the sudden shout of surprise, occasioned by the burst of Genius, had sufficient time to subside, and finally to settle into calm wonder and silent admiration. We find, moreover, this select few, making their entrance not only in different periods and places, but also in the different characters of Poets, Statesmen, Philosophers, and Moralists. Thus Homer, who appeared in some unknown age, involved in ignorance, tradition, and barbarism, introduced a noted era in Epic Poetry, and produced an example of composition, which nation after nation, and century after century, have always prided themselves upon imitating, but have never been able to excel. Shakspeare, by exhausting nature, by making acute discriminations of character, and by unfolding masterly views of the passions, has obtained a

name, which will long outlive the temporary modes of action, the peculiar superstitions, and the extravagant sallies of enthusiasm, which characterised and obscured his own period; a name, which has entitled him to the first rank among dramatic poets, and which will always attract the wonder and admiration of future ages. Newton, who unfolded to the world the mechanism of the planetary system, the decomposition of light, and the theory of the tides, made his amazing discoveries by the powers of a peculiar and profound genius, and with the modesty of true science, triumphing over contemporary ignorance and prejudice, established a new era in Natural Philosophy. Among this class of illustrious men, more of whom might be enumerated, Johnson holds a venerable rank, as he merits the honor of having introduced an era in Philology and Morals; of having surpassed all that went before him, and probably all that will succeed him, by his profound observations upon books and life; at the same time, in his literary character exemplifying the assertion, that the genius of the English nation appears rather in improvement than invention.

The intention of all moralists, no doubt, is to appropriate their reflections to all characters in all times. Truth, however, is founded upon a broad basis, and life, upon a narrow one. The outlines of moral truth are universal, and, like mathematical axioms, not to be changed by the changes of men and manners; but the characters of men are so peculiar and mutable, that what is true of one, is false of another; and what was considered illustrious in one age, is discarded in the next, as the greatest disgrace of rational beings. We are now astonished at the furious feats of chivalry, and are struck with indignant admiration at the devastations of the sacred pilgrimages and holy wars of the Crusades. We cannot but wonder that human beings should ever be so mad, as to sacrifice their lives to petty quarrels, or so weak as to suppose that eternal felicity was easily to be purchased by corporeal adroitness. Those authors, who have taken accurate surveys of men in different ages of the world, and whose researches always terminated in general conclusions, were too much impressed with the dignity of truth, to accommodate to the sentiments, the peculiarities, and fashions of a single age, what ought to be immutably firm, and as applicable to one period as to another; while other writers, by suiting their reflections to the manners of the times, to the fashions and incidents of a fleeting period, permitted the productions of their minds to perish almost in the occasions, which produced them. “The Rambler” we may pronounce far superior to “The Idler” of the same author, or to “The Spectator” of Addison; with the exception of his essays upon the pleasures of the imagination, and perhaps his Saturday pieces in general. The essays of the Rambler are always replete with general reflections, and were little more adapted to the age in which they were written, than to the preceding or the present age. But the most penetrating reader will discover very few general reflections in any of the periodical essays of Addison. They consist of humorous observations on daily incidents, correct criticisms, and agreeable descriptions of life in detail; and by adding grace and ease to the English language, by chastening a generally depraved taste, by censuring vice and theatrical errors, and by ridiculing singular fashions and characters, they were very beneficial to the age in which they were written. They are not, however, so useful to the present generation as the essays of Johnson, and will not be so valuable to the next race of men as to the present, when most of these temporary modes of life, which they censured are changed, and when those characters who

shone conspicuously in their descriptions, no longer attract the attention, or interest the feelings.—Johnson had made profound observations on what was ancient, was thoroughly acquainted with all that his own period afforded, and of course, had a fair prospect of the future current of morals. He, like a prudent philosopher, wrote for the successive generations of wit and learning in all ages, considering it not so useful to perpetuate what should be interesting to his contemporaries, as what should excite admiration as long as time and learning should endure. It is probable, moreover, that he thought his own age was sufficiently improved. Dissertations had already been written upon full-bottomed periwigs, upon the disposition of colours, the regulation of ruffles, and the graces of ogling; and the philosopher reflected that in such a state of the world, an improver of the morals was more necessary than a polisher of the manners of his countrymen. In "The Idler," he somewhat relaxes his severity as a teacher of wisdom, and regulates his reflections by the fashions of the times; yet he often supports his former stateliness, and when he descends to illustrations of common life has not the graceful ease of Addison.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

On the Calvinistic Doctrine of Moral Inability.

It has often been asserted by the Orthodox that Unitarians entertain too high an idea of human nature, and that they give to fallen man, considering his utter sinfulness, and the total depravity of his heart, far too high a place in the scale of being. Man, they think, is not represented in his true character; he does not appear in that sad condition to which the laws of his existence necessarily expose him; he exhibits nothing of that unholy disposition which he has derived from his ancestors; nothing of that innate pollution which corrupts and destroys all the sources of moral life at the heart; he is, in fact, represented as pure and upright in his nature, fortunate in his condition, and endowed with every faculty capable of rendering him useful and happy in the present and the future state. This exalted notion of man appears very shocking to the mind of the orthodox believer.—It would appear but ill among the humbling tenets that he embraces; were he to give it credence, it would effectually overthrow the principle of moral inability, which lies at the foundation of his system, and together with it all the prolific theories that have grown out of it.—As this doctrine however, goes effectually to destroy the free-agency of the mind, we are under no obligation to receive it. It requires only to be fairly represented to be rejected by every person of common sense and common honesty. We have indeed no hesitation in predicting, that the age is not very far distant when all pious men will strike out of their creed as erroneous and dangerous, an article that has given rise to a system of belief the most despotic and tyrannical ever imposed on the faith and consciences of men.

But it may be asked, why enter upon a subject that has so often and so ably been discussed before? What new ideas can be offered on so beaten a topic? What explanations can be offered that theologians and philosophers have not already advanced? Would it not be more useful to strike out new paths in theology and to manage points that have not yet been handled? To these natural inquiries we are ready to reply, that, as Christians, we feel that we have principles to defend, in opposition to the alarming errors that are abroad in the world. While we are branded with every ignominious epithet that human ingenuity can devise; while we are denounced as heretics, Deists and apostates, and are accused of denying every fundamental principle of that Christianity which we

reverence as a sacred institution, we feel impelled to speak. We despise all the low and little arts that are used to entrap us in our language. We disregard all those lofty anathemas, which would place us with the enemies of religion. We mean to advance firmly, resolutely and cautiously in the course that we have chosen, suffering no threats or difficulties to interrupt our progress, and relying calmly on the promises of the Superior Power, whom we serve. Our minds revolt from the principles of Calvinism; our humanity shudders for the fate of our fellow-creatures who embrace it; our reason cannot trace out the endless mazes of sophistry by which it endeavours to degrade us; our hearts cannot acknowledge the truth of the dark and gloomy picture which it draws of human wretchedness and debasement. We have a brighter and a more glorious idea of the celestial intelligence that animates us. We ask the indulgence of our readers, that we may defend our principles according to the dictates of sober sense and sound reason. Without reiterated and independent efforts, nothing can be accomplished. What hazards have we already run? To what have we exposed ourselves? We have indeed subjected ourselves to the contempt of a party. We have, I may say, exposed ourselves to the unmannerly insults of a party. Great injustice has been done us. How has it affected us? Has it destroyed any one of the eternal truths on which our salvation is suspended? Not one. We are equally regardless of it and of the authority which produced it. It has not, it never can deprive us of what we hold most dear in the Word of God, and in the divine philosophy derived from it. We perceive that the freedom of the human mind is shackled. The only question is, shall we assert its freedom or its slavery? It is a momentous question. It is big with the most important results. Every man ought to make up his opinion upon it. Shall we assert its freedom? We hesitate not to say that we shall assert it. Yes. We shall assert it in opposition to every system that would enslave it. We feel that we are free. Nothing shall ever separate us from the idea. It forms a constituent feature of the system which we embrace—a system which possesses a force and energy which Calvinists perceive and feel and regret, though they are never so unwilling to acknowledge it. Time will bring every thing to light. We wait with patience and confidence for the grand result, expecting and believing that it will prove honorable to the cause we have espoused. Are we again asked why we have chosen to discuss so beaten a topic? Bear with us, my friend. We perceive it lies at the foundation of a system of fatalism. It is ruinous to believe it. Destroy this article, and the whole system falls at once to the ground, and has no longer any existence. We feel impelled by every sense of duty, as men and as Christians, to reason against it. Were our life in jeopardy, we should not feel more interest. Deter us not, then. Parley not with us. We must speak of this error, and nothing ought to hinder us. Suffer us to say, that Unitarians are far, very far from asserting the perfection of human nature. Compared with superior beings, they confess that men are nothing but weakness, poverty and dust. Their defects and failings they perceive, they feel, and they lament. But they attribute to themselves no depravity or weakness but what they have entailed upon themselves by their own misconduct. While they acknowledge our follies, they are careful to attribute them to their proper cause. They are sensible that every passion that inflames the blood or kindles the resentment seizes away a blessing extended for our relief; that every indulgence which violates nature, pablies the soul that pants after it; that every error that bewilders the mind

conceals a deadly trap that seizes and corrupts our virtue; that every notion that exalts pride and flatters vanity, darkens the faculty that discerns truth, and narrows and limits the sphere of our ideas. Of these and many other truths, they are deeply sensible. They draw from them on all proper occasions, the tears of contrition and the confessions of penitence. In view of them, they give no indulgence to the angry passions, and in view of them, they humble their reason to the God they adore. They boast of no virtue in His presence; but they do not, they dare not, either by assertion or inference, attribute in any sense, the moral evils which they draw upon themselves to the benevolent Author of their existence. They would not suffer so profane an idea to gain place for a moment in their thoughts. It forms a feature of that system only which they deprecate as the greatest corruptions of Christianity.

But let us approach seriously and collectedly to the consideration of this important subject.—Let us examine it like rational beings and devout Christians, determined at all events to discover the truth, and to embrace nothing but the truth. What then is meant by that doctrine of moral inability which ever since the days of Calvin, has so much obscured the reasoning of the sophist, and perplexed the conceptions of the theologian? We answer, that the doctrine of moral inability results from the total depravity of human nature which lies at the foundation of the Calvinistic system. If it be laid down as a principle, that mankind are totally corrupt, let them receive their corruption from whatever source you please, supposing it to be innate, it so totally affects every principle of their nature as to render them incapable of discharging faithfully any moral or religious duty. It supposes that they are merely passive recipients, and simple machines, without the power of self-motion, and that they can never act or go forward until they are acted upon or driven. This is what is meant by the doctrine of moral inability. It is a plain and simple idea, which every man may comprehend. Every man may see too, to what it inevitably tends. It is the beginning of a system of fate. It is constantly made use of to convince mankind that they can do nothing, by which they are led to the conclusion that they have nothing to do. Believe it not, my friend, it is a most fatal error. It is the most dangerous idea that ever was embraced in any system of christian theology. We are accused of administering opiates to the soul which overpower it and shut out every ray of truth that would enlighten it. We are accused of strewing the paths we travel with roses, which delight the eye, but communicate no life to the spirit. We are charged with dealing in fine sentences and smooth addresses, which tickle the ear, while the heart that endites them is false and rotten, and pleases only to deceive you. But what idea can be more soothing to the guilty conscience than this? You may flatter yourself with the hope that it is true, but it is a most vain hope. It is fraught with danger of no common magnitude. Upon it your character, your virtue—nay, I may say, the very state of your existence is fearfully suspended. Trust it not; it will prove a delusive hope. You have every thing to do. Your destiny is in your own hands. Abuse it not. Give no credence to that crafty eloquence that would steal away your virtue. If you give it up, you relinquish every thing that renders yourself or your life valuable. Part with none of your talents; they are good talents; God has given them to you; they are yours, and they ought never to be considered cheap or useless. Is it necessary, in order to exalt God, that you degrade his creatures? Is it necessary, in order to shew that He is able and mighty, that you shew man to be

Printed by G. W. & Co.

unable and powerless? Fasten not your salvation on a figure of rhetoric. The truths of the Gospel do not depend on the power of contrast.

How does the Calvinist, when he finds that he has reduced man to a mere machine, extricate himself? He resorts to that wretched expedient of the schools, which gives to man a *natural* but not a *moral* power to become virtuous. Of all inventions, this is the most contemptible and the least worthy of a thinking being. It is a mere artifice of language. It never can, it never ought to satisfy the conscience. It never will satisfy the reason of man. No. There is a searching spirit within him that calls for higher authority. It asks for evidence that is real: It will not rest contented with unintelligible words, fanciful distinctions, and a jargon of terms that convey no meaning. It discards this idle distinction of epithets, that would temporize with its salvation and deprive it of its hope. Suppose it did not discard it. Suppose it allowed the distinction to be quite philosophical, what would it avail? If granted, it would not solve a single difficulty. The embarrassment would increase at every such evasion. The question would still arise without ceasing—Is there in man that moral power, by the exertion of which he may communicate virtue to his character, and life to the soul that animates him? If he does not possess this power, you may grant him every other, it is of no avail. It is mere singing to the wind. The distinction that is made is useless, nay it is worse, it is criminal, it is a mere artifice of the subtle sophist to cheat the conscience. How often is he brought to this crisis; how often does he perceive that he is brought to it, and though baffled in every point, how often does he return again to the charge, involve himself in the same course of reasoning, embarrass himself with the same contradictions, have recourse to the same artifice, cry up the same difficulties, and flounder in the same absurdities as before!

FOR THE PHILANTHROPIST.

1ST EPISTLE OF JOHN, V. 16.

"If any man see his brother sin a sin, which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death."

This passage of Scripture long perplexed my mind.—We know that there were some special promises made to the Apostles and those who by Jesus Christ were empowered to work miracles, in confirmation of the testimony they bore to Christ and his Gospel.—Such as that in Matthew 21, 22 "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in Prayer believing, ye shall receive." The gift of tongues was permanent in those who received it. But the power of working miracles was granted only on special occasions, and then in answer to prayer. I humbly conceive that their prayer for power to work miracles was only when immediately excited to it by the Holy Ghost. We have reason to believe that judicial sickness was sometimes inflicted for particular sins. St. Paul reproving the Corinthians for their disorderly manner of partaking of the Lord's supper, saith, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you." St. James also tells us, "Is any sick among you," &c. and the "prayer of Faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." This I apprehend means the prayer excited by the immediate impulse of the Holy Ghost; by which they knew that God would heal the sick person; for we know by experience that when pious Christians pray for their sick friends, though they pray in faith, their prayers are not always answered. We are not inspired, and therefore must always pray with submission to the will of God. May we not understand the words of St. John in the same sense? He saith, this is the

confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us, and if we know that he hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petition that we desired of him. Can this mean any thing more than the before mentioned passage, Matt. 21, 22. Is it not a parallel with it! If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, (for which sickness is inflicted upon him,) he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. I ask, how was he to know that the sin was not unto death, but by immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, by which he knew it was a proper occasion for God to manifest his power by healing the sick in answer to the prayer, and thereby setting the great seal of Heaven to the testimony they bore to Christ and his gospel. Were all the Christians in the Universe to pray for the pardon of a sin committed by any one, it would not be forgiven without the personal repentance and prayer of him who committed it. He shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. Can this mean any thing more than to restore the offender to health and grant him space for repentance. I have no doubt that God does often hear the prayers of pious Christians for their sick friends, and answers them by restoring them to health and giving them space for repentance; but cannot believe he ever did or will forgive a sinner without his personal repentance and prayer for himself. X. Z.

✶ The Editor regrets that owing to his absence a few weeks, the communication of "Bible Man," on the first page, remained unpublished longer than was proper. No neglect was intended. He takes this occasion to express his obligation to the venerable and learned writer of these Dialogues for the able assistance he has afforded him, and sincerely believes that the public will cordially acknowledge the propriety of this expression of his sentiments.

MARRIED.

In Nantucket, Capt. Christopher Wright, of Killingworth, to Mrs. Leah Ufford—Capt. Timothy Goodspeed, of Barnstable, to Mrs. Mary Coleman.

In Plymouth, Mr. Samuel W. Bagnall to Miss Minerva Thomas, of Middleborough.—Mr. Alvin M. Crayton to Miss Mary D. Holmes, both of Sandwich.

In North-Bridgewater, Mr. Albert Howard to Miss Olive Blanchard—Mr. Zion Packard to Miss Mary Howard—Samuel Gardner, Esq. to Miss Tiley Holbrook—Mr. Martin Cary to Miss Bethiah Howard—Mr. Robert Packard to Miss Betsey Howard.

DIED.

In this town, 21st inst. Mrs. MARY TUCKERMAN, aged 40, wife of Wm. Tuckerman.

In Dartmouth, 19th inst. Mr. CHARLES GIFFORD, aged 24, son of Mr. Joseph Gifford. By this afflicting dispensation, his wife is deprived of an affectionate husband, his infant child of a father's fostering care, his parents of a dutiful son, and his brothers, sisters and other connexions of a beloved and esteemed relative. His sickness, which was short and painful, he bore with christian patience, and died in the full hope of a happy immortality.

In Plympton, 16th inst. after a long and distressing sickness, Mrs. MARY DEXTER, consort of the Rev. Elijah Dexter, and only daughter of Nathaniel Morton, jun. Esq. of Freetown, aged 36. In her death, the Church and Society have sustained a heavy loss.

In Taunton, 21st inst. Miss Harriet Presbury, aged 25, daughter of Capt. John Presbury.

In Raynham, 20th inst. Mr. Silas Hall, aged 60.

In Duxbury, 13th inst. Dr. Rufus Hathaway, aged 52.—Mr. Samuel Chandler, aged 73.—14th, Mr. James Polden, aged 37, leaving a wife and seven children.—17th Mr. Lot Hunt, aged 52; the sixth person that had died in that town within six days, five of whom were heads of families.

In Nantucket, Tristram Hussey, Esq. aged 69.—Mr. James Norton, aged 37.—Mrs. Mary Coffin, aged 86, widow of Mr. Stephen Coffin.

POETRY.

FROM THE COLUMBIAN REPORTER.

THE MORNING STAR.

FAIR Star of day, I sing thy charms,
Thou glory of the morning sky,
For often has thy gladdening ray,
Beamed sweetly on my gazing eye.

When by the bed of sickness placed,
In the pale taper's feeble light,
When not a sound is heard to break
The long, lone watches of the night:

Save now and then a brother's groan,
Breathed from the restless couch of pain,
Half breathed—as though the sufferer checked
His heart—and felt that groans were vain.

Save the faint ticking of a watch,
Counting the tedious minutes o'er,
And as it travels slowly round,
Points to the medicinal hour.

While thus the periods of the night:
Roll sad and heavily along,
How often turns the wakeful eye,
To meet the first approach of dawn.

Oh! then how pleasant 'tis to see
From the dark verge that bounds the sky,
The herald of the morning rise,
And wing his cheering flight on high.

But shall I sing of lesser orbs,
And fail to celebrate His birth,
Whose soul-reviving beams diffuse
Salvation o'er a ruined earth?

When a lost miserable world,
Sin-sick—death-struck in darkness lay,
Then Jesus didst thou pour abroad,
The splendours of eternal day.

Awake my harp—thy sweetest strains,
The glories of His name rehearse—
The light of heaven—the light of men,
The Day-Star of the Universe!

NIGHT PIECE.

In the wilderness of Upper Canada.

"When it was midnight, I walked out, and strolled into the woods contiguous to the house. A glorious moon had ascended to the summit of the arch heaven, and poured a perpendicular flood of light upon the silent world below. The starry hosts sparkled brightly, while they emerged above the horizon, but gradually faded in twinkling points as they rose in the sky; and the motionless trees stretched their majestic boughs towards the cloudless firmament, and the rustling of a withered leaf, or the distant howl of a wolf, was all that broke upon my ear. I was suddenly aroused from a delicious reverie, by observing a dark object moving slowly and cautiously among the trees. I at first fancied it was a bear, but on further inspection discovered an Indian on all fours. For a moment I felt unwilling to throw myself in his way lest he should be meditating some sinister design against me—however, on his waving his hand, and putting his finger to his lips, I approached him, and notwithstanding his injunction to silence, inquired what he did there? "Me watch to see the deer kneel, replied he, this is Christmas night, and all the deer fall on their knees to the great Spirit," and looking up.—The solemnity of the scene, and the grandeur of the idea, alike contributed to fill me with awe. It was affecting to find traces of christian faith existing in such a place, even in the form of such a tradition.

TERMS OF THE PHILANTHROPIST:

Two Dollars and Fifty Cents per annum, payable half-yearly in advance.